

PODCASTING: a primer

Spear Communications

Understand. Be understood.

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Have you ever considered podcasting?

I've recorded dozens of podcasts over the years, and I love podcasting. I suppose it was a logical progression from the interviews I was doing for my books and newspaper articles.

Nothing inspires me more than dynamic, creative people. A podcast is just another of my many excuses to seek out and connect with interesting folks.

That's what I love to do most.

So one day I decided I was going to podcast. But how?

I read articles and watched tutorials. I'd had some experience working in recording studios, which helped.

But the truth is that my early podcasts were rough. I learned as I went.

Eventually I worked out the wrinkles.

Below you will find an infographic of my gear, but remember: podcasting is much more than having good gear.

Here are what I think make great podcasts

- A clear, well-defined topic
- Thoughtful hosts with good rapport and intellectual curiosity
- An ability to listen actively to guests and to perceive, and then tease out, interesting, latent subjects that they only touch upon in passing (Howard Stern is the master of this technique)
- A sense of humor
- An ability to talk naturally and fluidly in an unscripted way
- Knowing just how long to stretch out, or not to stretch out, a topic
- Tasteful editing (for length, but also for audio quality)

Who knows? You may have the make-up of a great podcaster!

Don't worry about whether or not your podcast will sound professional, especially in the beginning.

There are many popular programs that are not made to professional production values. And not all slick podcasts are great!

If you have a decent laptop, you can pick up a usb mic for under \$100. The best podcast recording and editing software in my opinion is Audacity, and it's free.

That means you could be creating and uploading podcasts to your blog for about \$100.

Because I work in media and have a background in music, I already owned a lot of gear that I could repurpose for podcasting.

You don't need all this gear, however. But if you're curious to know, then on the next page there is an infographic of what I use to podcast.



Spear Communications PODCASTING GEAR

You can plug an inexpensive usb condenser mic into a laptop and record using free software like Audacity. For pro results, I recommend a mixing board (to provide clean pre-amp to the mics) and a stand-alone digital recorder with XLR inputs. I use the laptop to play pre-recorded clips using Ambrosia Software's program, Soundboard. For post-production I run the WAV files through a free program called Levelator. Then I import the Levelator file into Audacity to edit, mix, "sweeten," tag, & export my podcast.



POP SCREEN

MIC & TABLE STAND
I use Shure SM-58s



MIXING BOARD



I use a Mackie
1202-VLZ3

XLR CABLES (3-6 FT.)



DIGITAL RECORDER



Roland R-26



HEADPHONES
I use Sennheiser HD 202s

LAPTOP Macbook Air

